

# **The 21<sup>st</sup> Century High-Performing Public School Facilities Act**

## ***Improving Education, Strengthening the Economy, Fighting Global Warming***

*School buildings should be safe and healthy learning environments for children. But according to recent estimates, America's schools are tens or even hundreds of billions of dollars short of the funding needed to bring them up to good condition. Meanwhile, research shows a correlation between school facility quality and student achievement. Despite the need to modernize school buildings, since 2001 the federal government has provided almost no direct aid to help states and schools pay for school construction and repair. Modernizing school buildings would also create jobs in the construction industry, one of the industries hit hardest by the recent economic downturn. And by modernizing school buildings to make them more energy efficient and more reliant on renewable sources of energy, modernized school buildings can also help reduce the emissions that contribute to global warming.*

*The 21st Century High-Performing Public Schools Facilities Act would:*

### **Provide schools with access to funding for modernization, renovation and repair projects**

- Authorizes \$6.4 billion for school construction projects for fiscal year 2009, and ensures that school districts will quickly receive funds for school modernization, renovation, and repair projects that improve the teaching and learning climate, health and safety, and energy efficiency.
- Allocates the same percentage of funds to states and school districts that they receive under Part A of Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, except that it guarantees each such district a minimum of \$5,000.

### **Encourage energy efficiency and the use of renewable resources in schools**

- Requires that funds be used for projects that meet one of three widely recognized green building standards: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design; Energy Star; or Collaborative for High Performance Schools – or equivalent state or local standards.
- Allows states to reserve one percent of funds to administer the program and to develop a plan to create a statewide database of schools' facilities, modernization and repair needs, energy uses, carbon footprints, and schools' energy efficiency quality plans.
- Allows school districts to waive the green building requirements in certain cases where circumstances make the requirements impracticable, but still ensures that at least 90 percent of funds will be used for green projects by 2013.
- Requires school districts to publicly report the educational, energy and environmental benefits of projects, how they comply with the green building requirements, and the percentage of funds used for projects at low-income and rural schools.
- Requires the Secretary of Education, in consultation with the Secretary of Energy and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, to create a database of the best practices in school construction and to provide technical assistance to states and school districts regarding best practices.

### **Provide additional aid to Gulf Coast schools still recovering from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita**

- Authorizes separate funds – half a billion dollars over five years – for public schools that were damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

### **Ensure fair wages and benefits for workers by applying Davis-Bacon protections to all grants for school modernization, renovation, and repair projects**